

FROM (DEPT/ DIVISION): County Counsel

SUBJECT: Stance Against Racism

<p>Background:</p> <p>It has been requested that the Board take formal action to document its stance against racism in Umatilla County. A resolution has been drafted outlining the stance of the Board against racism, discrimination and social injustices in Umatilla County and initiatives to accomplish more racial equity in the county.</p>	<p>Requested Action:</p> <p>Adopt Order No. BCC2020-059</p>
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ATTACHMENTS: Proposed Order

*****For Internal Use Only*****

Checkoffs:

- () Dept. Heard (copy)
- () Human Resources (copy)
- () Fiscal
- (X) Legal (copy)
- () (Other - List:)

To be notified of Meeting:

Needed at Meeting:

Scheduled for meeting on: August 5, 2020

Action taken:

Follow-up:

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF UMATILLA COUNTY

STATE OF OREGON

In the Matter of Board)
Stance Against Racism,) ORDER NO. BCC2020-058
Discrimination and Social)
Injustices in Umatilla County)

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners firmly believes that systemic racism exists, but has no place, in Umatilla County, and

WHEREAS the Board of Commissioners respect the peaceful protests that have been conducted throughout Umatilla County on behalf of citizens of color, and

WHEREAS the Board of Commissioners recognize the multiple benefits that diversity contributes to the richness of our collective lives, and

WHEREAS we condemn all forms of discrimination on the basis of religion, national origin, race, color, gender, age or sexual orientation as called out in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and

WHEREAS we are in the midst of a transformational period in our history that, if guided properly, could lead to a more enlightened future on behalf of racial equity.

NOW, therefore be it resolved and ordered that the Board of Commissioners adopt this message and the following position paper on moving forward with pro-active initiatives:

With Regard to Racial Equity in Umatilla County

1. The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners reaffirms their earlier statement regarding the fact it is important to remember that we live in a diverse county where racial equity must be a critical part of our mission.

2. As one of Oregon's most diverse counties, it is important we reach out to our Hispanic/Latinx, Indigenous, Black, Asian-Americans, and other individuals of color in such a way that we hear their voices and view issues through their lens rather than through the lens of those who would speak for them whether it would be us or others.
3. The tragic death of George Floyd has created an awakening that has resonated across the nation and around the world and we understand and appreciate the outrage that has resulted and the message that we must put an end to racial inequity wherever it exists. We also recognize that an awakening only has value and meaning if it transforms into a greater, more positive future; when reaction is replaced by tangible differences in thought, purpose, action, and reality.

We can do better and we must do better.

To accomplish more racial equity in Umatilla County, the Board adopts these initiatives:

A. In recent months we have been reminded that our most economically fragile citizens, many of whom are individuals of color, do not have equitable access to health care. In light of this historical inequity, Umatilla County needs to explore options for improving access to quality health care both in the short-term and in the long term as a permanent solution.

B. We have also been reminded that our most economically fragile citizens, and again, many of whom are individuals of color, do not have equitable access to quality housing options. In light of this historical inequity, Umatilla County needs to explore options for improving housing choices both in the short-term and in the long term as a permanent solution.

C. Umatilla County has long been committed, and has been successful in its efforts to engage a work force that reflects the diverse makeup of the County we serve. This commitment must continue.

D. Umatilla County recognizes that communities function best when all citizens are actively engaged in political and civic affairs. Opportunities must be provided for encouraging more citizens of color to be engaged.

E. The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners recognize the inextricable relationship between immigration policies and the economy of the Mid-Columbia region recognizing that without avenues for individuals to access work opportunities we lose both their critical economic contribution and the richness their presence brings to our communities. Economic growth within the county must be available to all segments of our population.

F. The history of Umatilla County and the fabric that defines us, was woven by waves of immigrants from around the world whose contributions to our being and the cultural heritage they have contributed, will only grow richer as we continue to welcome those seeking an opportunity to become part of our future. Barriers to accomplishing this goal must be stopped.

G. We have also learned that when children are not permitted to attend school in person, grave inequities become apparent in terms of access to the tools required by distance learning. This inequity has the greatest impact on families of color but extends to all families who do not have reliable access to on-line learning. This, too, must be addressed.

H. Umatilla County recognizes that food security and accessibility are key components of a safe and healthy life and that families of color are disproportionately impacted by inequities in terms of a healthy and dependable diet. Accessibility for all must be sought.

I. Umatilla County believes the State of Oregon should create a mental health reinvestment program so that resources are available to handle mental health crises with trained personnel who have appropriate resources at their disposal and are available to everyone in our community.

J. Umatilla County also urges the State of Oregon to honor its promise regarding community corrections in order to expand resources for dealing appropriately with individuals who are on parole and probation as a tool, similar to alcohol and drug treatment, for turning their lives around, and particularly for those disproportionally represented within this population.

K. Umatilla County can and must become a model for the State of Oregon in terms of our concerted effort to assure the presence of equity, dignity and justice for everyone.

DATED this 5th day of August, 2020.

UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

John M. Shafer, Chair

George L. Murdock, Commissioner

William J. Elfering, Commissioner

ATTEST:
OFFICE OF COUNTY RECORDS

Records Officer